

Naming a Parkette at 55B Brock Avenue in Honour of Pat Capponi

Date: October 20, 2025

To: Toronto East York Community Council

From: Interim General Manager, Parks and Recreation

Wards: 4 - Parkdale-High Park

SUMMARY

City Council adopted the Commemorative Framework at its July 2022 meeting. The Framework provides guidance to the public, Elected Officials, and City staff regarding the commemorative naming and renaming of streets and City properties, and the consideration of proposals for new and existing commemorative monuments.

The subject naming proposal was submitted by Ward 4 (Parkdale-High Park) City Councillor Gord Perks. The proposal seeks to name a new parkette located at 55B Brock Avenue as “Pat Capponi Parkette”. This proposal has garnered significant support from long-time residents and community members who either collaborated directly with Pat Capponi or recognize her substantial impact on the Parkdale community.

Parks and Recreation, in collaboration with the Economic Development and Culture Division, and Strategic Partnerships reviewed the application. The review concluded that the naming proposal satisfies the criteria of the Property Naming Policy and aligns with the Guiding Principles for Commemoration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim General Manager, Parks and Recreation recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council adopt the naming of a parkette at 55B Brock Avenue to “Pat Capponi Parkette”.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funding for the costs associated with the production and installation of the new signage will be accommodated within the 2025 Capital Budget for Parks and Recreation.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, adopted the following:

1. City Council adopt the City of Toronto Commemorative Framework, consisting of:
 - a. the Guiding Principles for Commemoration in Attachment 1 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager, as amended by Part 2 below:
 - b. the revised City of Toronto Street Naming Policy in Attachment 2 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager;
 - c. the revised City of Toronto Property Naming Policy in Attachment 3 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager; and
 - d. the revised City of Toronto Public Art and Monument Donations Policy in Attachment 4 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.6>

COMMENTS

For new properties, naming proposals must be submitted to the City prior to the conclusion of the design process and before the commencement of construction and documentation preparation.

The application to name the new parkette at 55B Brock Avenue in the Parkdale neighbourhood as the “Pat Capponi Parkette” presents substantive evidence of the enduring influence of Pat Capponi (1949–2020) through her advocacy for individuals living with mental health issues and those living on low incomes. Ms. Capponi’s work resulted in policy changes in Toronto that improved the living conditions of individuals living with mental illness.

The naming proposal was submitted by Ward 4 (Parkdale-High Park) City Councillor Gord Perks. The application is strongly supported by long-time residents and community members who either worked directly with Pat Capponi or recognize her significant impact on the Parkdale community. Letters of support from former City of Toronto Mayor Art Eggleton and members of the legal community familiar with Ms. Capponi’s work were included with the naming application. The application documented support via 27 email messages submitted to Councillor Perks’ office. The applicant also notes that letters of support were received from the following community organizations

and leaders: Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC), the Gerstein Crisis Centre, Social Planning Toronto, West Neighbourhood House, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, and Dr. Pauline Pariser.

Furthermore, the applicant's submission highlights Ms. Capponi's longstanding commitment to utilizing her lived experience through storytelling to advocate for improvements to the mental health system and for individuals experiencing poverty. Staff research indicates that her work also provided support to newcomers and to survivors of addiction and abuse. As an author, Ms. Capponi published works spanning memoir, non-fiction, and a murder mystery series, all of which brought attention to the living conditions of marginalized communities in Toronto.

In terms of historical and cultural relevance, the name honours a community leader whose advocacy, grounded in lived experience, contributed to the improvement of the quality of life for community members transitioning in and out of the mental health care system in Toronto and Ontario. Ms. Capponi was involved in the establishment of several community support organizations, including:

- Voices from the Street, which provided leadership training to people from equity-deserving groups to enable their participation in shaping public policy affecting their lives.
- Resident and Consumer Initiative (RACI), a group that brought together psychiatric residents and mental health consumers to meet and socialize outside clinical settings.
- The Mayor's Action Task Force on Discharged Psychiatric Patients, to which former Mayor Art Eggleton appointed Ms. Capponi, leading to the opening of the Gerstein Crisis Centre.

Ms. Capponi also served on the inaugural board of the Centre for Addition and Mental Health (CAMH). In recognition of more than three decades of service to her community—often referred to by her as “her folks”—Ms. Capponi received numerous honours, including the Order of Ontario (1993), the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2002), the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012), the Order of Canada (2015), and CivicAction's Lifetime Achievement Award (2018).

In summary, as outlined in the application and confirmed by City staff research, Pat Capponi is meaningfully connected to the social history of this City as a Toronto-based community leader, author, and mental health advocate. Her work, rooted in her own lived experience, advanced the rights and quality of life of people living in poverty and those navigating the mental health care system. Over more than three decades, she founded and supported community organizations, served on influential boards and advisory councils, and was recognized with honours including the Order of Ontario, the Order of Canada, and multiple Queen's Jubilee medals.

Recommended Park

The new parkette in question is located at 55B Brock Avenue. This new parkette is the result of a residential development project near Brock Avenue and Queen Street West in the Parkdale neighbourhood.

City of Toronto Property Naming Policy

Community Councils possess delegated authority to decide property naming matters that comply with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy.

Parks and Recreation consulted with Strategic Partnerships and Economic Development and Culture to ensure the naming met the criteria of the Property Naming Policy and aligned with the Guiding Principles for Commemoration. Given that City staff advised that the naming meets all the criteria, staff recommend that Community Council name the parkette located at 55B Brock Avenue as "Pat Capponi Parkette".

The proposed name was circulated for comment and is acceptable to Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedic Services.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Justin Hana, on behalf of Tom Azouz
Interim General Manager, Parks and Recreation

ATTACHMENT 1 – IMAGE OF PARKETTE LOCATION AT 55B BROCK AVE

ATTACHMENTS

The park location from the sidewalk. This image shows a rectangular patch of grass in-between a condo on the left and a house on the right.

